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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to provide a profile of students enrolled in doctoral programs in student affairs administration during the 1988-1989 academic year. Questionnaires were sent to the administrative heads of doctoral programs in student affairs administration at the 58 institutions in the United States listed in the American College Personnel Association's "Guide to Graduate Preparation Programs" as having such programs. Data from 48 responding institutions identified a total of 775 students enrolled in doctoral programs at the institutions included in the study. Over one-half of the students were women (56.3%). Most students were enrolled in institutions located in the Southeast and Great Lakes regions, with the smallest number enrolled in Pacific region institutions. The majority of students (62.5%) were enrolled part-time in their programs. Caucasians made up 79.5% of the students; blacks comprised nearly 14% of the students, followed by Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. Over 30% of the students were between the ages of 31 and 35, 27.3% were between 26 and 30, and 22.8% were between 36 and 40. Few students were over 50 or under 25 years of age. Over 80% of the students intended to pursue administrative careers, with the balance of the students having career plans along a faculty track. (A table showing number of respondents by regional grouping and a list of participating institutions are appended.) (NB)

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Selected Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Doctoral Programs in Student Affairs, 1988-1989

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Prepared for
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Selected Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Doctoral Programs in Student Affairs, 1988-1989

At the Spring, 1988 meeting of Commission XII (Professional Education of Student Personnel Workers in Higher Education) of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) various research topics were discussed as have potential for further investigation. The commission finally decided that a profile of students enrolled in doctoral programs in student affairs administration would be worthy of a further look. With that direction, the project reported hereafter was undertaken.

There has been considerable discussion about the feminization of student affairs according to Hamrick & Carlisle, (1988) who pointed out that 58% of the members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators are female, while 57% of ACPA's membership are female. On the other hand, women consisted of 25% of the voting members of NASPA (Wills, Healy & Mahan, 1987). Voting delegates in NASPA usually are the chief student affairs officer. ACPA's leadership, on the other hand, reflected the gender representation in the association's membership in that in 1987-1988 55% of all directorate body members were female (Hamrick & Carlisle, 1988).

Women also comprise a majority of the enrollment in several prominent master's degree programs in student affairs administration. According to Hamrick and Carlisle (1988), 58% of the Fall, 1987 entering class at Ohio State University were women, and 67%

of the entering class at Bowling Green State University were women.

The purpose of this study was to determine certain selected characteristics of students enrolled in doctoral programs in student affairs administration during the 1988-1989 academic year. Specifically, the study attempted to identify the following characteristics of those students:

1. Their status (full or part time);
2. Their age
3. Their gender;
4. Their race;
5. Their career aspirations.

Method

Sampling Procedures

The current ACPA Guide to Graduate Preparation Programs listed 58 institutions in the United States as having doctoral level programs in student affairs administration. The individual who was listed as the administrative head of the program was sent a copy of the questionnaire. When that person was no longer administratively responsible for the program, the questionnaire was to be forwarded to another faculty member in the academic unit.

Results

Of the 58 institutions identified in the directory, responses were elicited from 49, for a response rate of 84.5%. One institutional respondent indicated that his doctoral program had been suspended pending a search for his replacement and that there were no students currently enrolled in the program. As a consequence the results which follow are based on data reported by 48 respondents. For some categories the respondents did not report the data which were sought and left the questionnaire blank. That will be discussed further in this report. Participants are listed in Appendix two.

The respondents identified a total of 775 students enrolled in doctoral programs at the institutions included in the study The greatest number of students was enrolled in institutions located in the Southeast and Great Lakes regions, while the smallest number of students was enrolled in Pacific region institutions.

The majority of the students identified by the respondents were part-time. The definition of part-time versus full time was left up to the individual respondent. Approximately 5/8 of the students (62.5%) were enrolled in their program on a part-time basis. The range in full time enrollment by region was from nearly half (48.4%) in the Great Lakes region to under 30% in the Northeast (28.4%).

Over half (56.3%) of the students were reported as being women. Women were in the majority of the students in all

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was completed by the author in consultation with the chair of Commission XII of ACPA. The information that was sought included simple, demographic data. The questionnaire was reviewed by several administrative colleagues for clarity at Wichita State University before being sent to the respondents.

Data Collection

The instrument was mailed to the administrative heads of the doctoral programs in mid-Fall, 1988, with two follow-up mailings being completed before the end of 1988. Included in the mailing packet were the questionnaire, a cover letter, and a post paid return envelope. The two additional follow-up mailings were undertaken to generate a higher rate of participation.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using sample statistical procedures including calculating frequencies and percentages on both a regional and national basis. The regions that were chosen identified on an adaptation of the regions utilized by the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International in identifying regional groupings of states. These regions are arbitrary. Appendix one includes a listing of the regions and the number of respondents per region.

the regions except the Northeast and Pacific regions. In the Intermountain region, they comprised nearly 70% of the students enrolled.

Caucasians made up the majority of the students identified by the respondents (79.5%). Blacks comprised nearly 14% of the students, followed by Hispanics, Native Americans and Asian Americans. Nearly 20% of the students were identified as being members of minority groups.

The plurality of the students in the study were identified as having an age between 31 and 35 (30.9%), followed in order by 26-30 (27.3%) and 36-40 (22.8%). Few students were reported as being over 50 years of age or having an age which fell in the category of 21-25.

The respondents indicated that over 80% of the students enrolled in their programs intended to pursue administrative careers. The balance of the students (19.8%) were reported as having career plans along a faculty track The results of the survey are listed in Table 1.

Discussion

It is important for the reader to note that for two categories, age and career plans, nearly 200 students were not accounted for by the respondents. In several instances the respondents indicated that they simply did not have the data at their finger tips and would have been forced to ask every student

his or her age, and his or her career plans. A number of the respondents elected not to do so.

Another caveat for the reader to remember is that this data are based on information supplied by the respondents. It is highly likely that errors could have been made by the respondents in completing the questionnaires, which could account for some variance from the actual characteristics of students enrolled in doctoral programs in Fall, 1989.

It is somewhat surprising that there are nearly 800 students enrolled in doctoral programs in 1988-1989. That is a larger number than what might have been postulated by the author, although the geographic distribution is not. The student affairs programs of long historical standing in the United States are located East of the Mississippi River and that is reflected in the enrollment by region.

That such a large percentage of students is enrolled on a part-time basis is a bit surprising. Most of the individuals enrolled in doctoral programs, one could surmise, are employed on a full time basis, which has several implications. Among these are that the time needed to complete a degree may be extended somewhat beyond the traditional three year period, and that the socialization of doctoral students by service as graduate assistants in the academic departments in which they are enrolled may not occur to the degree that it might if the students had a full time presence on campus. One wonders if the placement of the graduates of these programs in the years hence will be in the

work site where the students are already located. That is probably a question for another study.

There has been some discussion about the feminization of student affairs (Hamrick & Carlisle, 1988) in recent years. This study would indicate that the future leadership of the profession, if that can be identified by those seeking terminal degrees, will be more in the hands of women than is currently the case. Obviously, many intervening variables may affect that trend, but historically the senior leadership in any profession results from those with the most formal education. In the case of this study, we learned that over 56% of the students seeking this terminal degree were women.

Future progress may be made on the affirmative action front as it applies to race, if the results of this study are indicative of a trend. Just over 20% of the doctoral students enrolled according to this study were members of minority groups. What that means is that more members of minority groups will be educated to a senior level and therefore will have the educational background dictated for senior positions in the student affairs field. However, the range in minority enrollment in doctoral programs varies widely by region, if one compares the Inter-Mountain and Pacific regions with the Southeast and Central regions.

That nearly 20% of the students enrolled in these programs wish to pursue a career as a faculty member is a bit surprising, in that if all 105 were to land faculty positions, that would make for a substantial replacement of those faculty currently

teaching and doing research in student affairs doctoral programs. It would appear unlikely that all 105 students will assume faculty positions upon graduation.

A study such as this one only begins to open research avenues for further study. The question of placement, identified earlier, is worthy of investigation. So, too, are such issues as to why students enrolled in doctoral programs, what influenced their selection of a particular institution, what they are learning in a particular course of study, and how they expect their careers to be influenced by their pursuit of a doctoral degree. For now, it is hoped that this study will provide an initial picture of the students enrolled in doctoral programs in student affairs administration in 1988-1989.

Appendix 1

Regional Groupings

Northeast: New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire (Five respondents)

Mid Atlantic: Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, Wester Virginia, District of Columbia (three respondents)

Great Lakes: Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota (12 respondents)

Southeast: Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina (ten respondents)

Central: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Arkansas, Texas, Missouri (ten respondents)

Inter Mountain: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada (five respondents)

Pacific: California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, Alaska (three respondents.)

Appendix 2

Participants in the Study

Auburn University

The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa)

The University of Arizona

The University of Southern California

The University of Denver

The University of Northern Colorado

The University of Connecticut

The American University (DC)

Florida State University

The University of Florida

The University Georgia

Loyola University (IL)

Southern Illinois University

Indiana State University

Indiana University (Bloomington)

Purdue University

Iowa State University

The University of Iowa

Kansas State University

The University of Maine (Orono)

The University of Maryland (College Park)

Michigan State University

The University of Michigan

Western Michigan University

Mississippi State University

Saint Louis University

The University of Missouri (Columbia)

The University of Nebraska (Lincoln)

The University of Nevada (Reno)

Teacher's College (Columbia University)

The State University of New York (Buffalo)

The University of North Carolina (Greensboro)

Bowling Green State University

Miami University

Ohio University

The University of Cincinnati

Oklahoma State University

The University of Oklahoma

Oregon State University

Pennsylvania State University (University Park)

The University of South Carolina

East Texas State University

University of North Texas (North Texas State University)

Texas Tech University

The University of Vermont

The University of Virginia

Virginia Tech University

Washington State University

The University of Wyoming

References

Hamrick, F.A., & Carlisle, L.W. (1988). The feminization of student affairs. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Willis, P.H., Healy, M., & Mahan, L. (1987-88). Women in NASPA. NASPA Forum, 4, 3.

Table 1
Results of the Survey

		Status		Age							Gender		Race						Career	
Region	#	Fulltime	Part-time	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	50'	Male	Female	Asian	Black	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	Administration	Faculty
Central	105	41.1 44	58.9 63	5.4 5	19.4 18	20.5 19	34.4 32	9.7 9	7.6 7	3.3 3	43.7 45	56.4 58	1.2 1	25.0 22	67.1 59	5.7 5	0	0	80.4 82	19.6 20
MA	113	43.7 49	56.7 64	.9 1	22.2 25	25.7 29	23.9 27	16.9 19	6.2 7	4.5 5	40.7 46	59.3 67	1.8 2	10.7 12	83.2 94	3.6 4	.9 1	0	72.3 52	27.8 20
IM	117	30.8 36	67.3 81	2.4 1	7.2 3	26.2 11	26.2 11	23.8 10	11.9 5	2.4 1	30.8 36	69.3 81		1.7 2	95.8 112	2.6 3			71.5 30	28.6 12
SE	180	33.4 60	66.7 120	2.3 2	29.9 26	41.4 36	19.6 17	6.9 6	0	0	42.2 65	57.8 89	1.3 2	15.6 24	69.5 107	2.6 4	11.1 17		73.1 65	27.0 24
GL	157	48.4 58	51.7 62	1.3 2	43.3 65	35.9 43	19.4 22	5.8 9	2.6 3	0	49.7 78	50.3 79	.7 1	18.1 28	80.7 125	.7 1			85.3 134	14.7 22
NE	81	28.4 23	71.6 58	1.3 1	18.6 15	44.5 36	26.0 21	9.9 8	0	0	51.9 42	48.2 39	3.7 3	12.4 10	77.8 63	6.2 5			89.6 43	10.5 5
PAC	22	36.4 8	63.7 14	0	41.2 7	35.3 6	17.7 3	5.9 1	0	0	54.6 12	45.5 10	0	9.1 2	86.4 19	4.6 1			90.9 20	9.1 2
TOTAL	775	278 37.6	462 62.5	12 2.1	159 27.3	180 30.9	133 22.8	69 11.9	22 3.8	9 1.6	324 43.8	416 56.3	9 1.3	100 13.8	579 79.5	23 3.2	18 2.5		426 80.3	106 19.8